

THE PERSONALITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

JACOB C. CASSEL.

In these days of "higher criticism," skepticism and perversion, one frequently meets those that deny the Holy Spirit, and contend that the Spirit is simply an *it*, or an influence, having none of the characteristics of an individuality. This theory is mainly based upon the fact that some translators have used the neutral pronoun *it*, instead of the definite pronouns *he* or *him* when referring to the Spirit of God. This view is not only unscriptural, but borders on the ridiculous. The angel of the Lord appeared unto Joseph in a dream and said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary, thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 1:20. Lexicographers define the word "*it*" as a neutral pronoun, standing for anything except males and females. According to these interpreters, or misinterpreters we would have the remarkable anomaly of a child being born from an *it* or an *influence* or from something that had no personality.

It is truly wonderful what skepticism will make out of the truth.

Again, Jesus commands that men shall be baptized into the names of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. According to those would-be interpreters men are to be baptized into the names of two persons, and one *it*, or influence, something that has neither entity, intelligence, nor being, and yet, this indefinable, impersonal something is to be the prevailing, ruling, guiding and comforting power in the Christian life. Moreover (he) *it* is to testify of Christ. I wonder how the testimony of an *it* would be regarded in a court of justice. I think the judge would want to know where, and what the *it* was before he would proceed with the case, and methinks that the Judge of the quick and dead will do the same.

Again, it is said of God that he is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. God is a spirit and yet he is a person, but the Spirit of God, that part of his own being which he has commissioned to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment is not a person, but an *it*. Strange reasoning, indeed.

Again, Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in

you? The Spirit, that is the God of heaven, is a *person*, but the same personal God when he dwells in man by his Spirit ceases to be a person. I do wonder how God transforms his omnipotence, intelligence, and personality into an unintelligent, indefinite, impersonal something called *it*.

Concerning the disciples on the day of Pentecost it is said, "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." That must have been a very intelligent *it* which gave the apostles the ability to speak the languages of the Parthians, Medes, Elamites and the rest of the nationalities represented on the day of Pentecost. Just think of an *it* or an *influence*, something without mind or intelligence suddenly teaching us to speak the French or Greek languages. If the human mind can conceive the possibility of such a phenomena, it may be able to conceive how an impersonal spirit can do the work that the Holy Ghost has done, and is doing, but translators and interpreters must excuse common-sense people from accepting their theories until this problem is solved. One may go to Greece to study the Greek language, where there are strong Greek influences, and yet he would never learn the language except in so far as it would be taught him by minds, or persons familiar with it.

Again, Luke in his gospel says, "the Holy Ghost descended upon Jesus in the bodily shape of a dove." It must have been a very lively *it* or *influence* that could transform itself from a non-entity into entity. If this view is correct, the Darwinian theory of evolution must after all be the true solution of the problem of life.

Concerning Ananias, Peter said, "Ananias why has Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" Because Ananias and Sapphira tempted the Spirit of God they both fell dead. Surely, a very remarkable *it* or *influence* that had the intelligence and personality to take vengeance upon those two famous liars. The atmosphere may become so humid that it will destroy life; the wind may be so strong that it will blow men to pieces; water may drown, and fire may burn men, but none of these *its*, or elements have the intelligence to aim their vengeance at any one particular person. Their work is hap-hazard, without aim, and so would be the work of the Holy Spirit if it were a

mere *it*, or influence. The very fact that the Spirit had the intelligence to detect a lie, and the power to take vengeance is unmistakable proof of his personality.

At the church at Antioch as the people ministered unto the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." If the word said that the people were influenced to set apart Barnabas and Saul unto the work of the Spirit there would be the semblance of an *it* or influence in it, but the Word distinctly says that the Holy Ghost had called them before the people were aware of it, and simply asked them to confirm the call. The Word further says they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost. How would it sound to say, they were sent forth by *it*, or by an *it*?

Upon the the occasion of the first church council on record at Jerusalem when giving their decision, the Apostles said it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and us. If they had said that they were influenced by the Word or Spirit of God to give their decision as they did, the possibility of an *it* would enter into question, but they gave priority to the Holy Ghost, and us; thus showing that the Spirit was a force in himself, and made his own decision, which agreed with that of the Apostles, thus showing the independence, intelligence and personality of the Spirit beyond the possibility of a question.

I confess I am astonished to find how incontrovertible the personality of the Holy Spirit is in the word of God. To regard him in any other light one has to dismiss every rule of language, and logic, and sink every atom of common sense; and besides deny, and grieve him who is to be our comforter, guide and indweller, who is to help us in our infirmities, and make intercessions for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. It takes more than a mere influence to perform such offices.

If as much attention were paid to brains as to hats and feathers, and to hearts as to coats and dresses, the times would know men and women more worthy of the divine mark.

The graces of our Beloved fill our hearts with rapture. The beauty and glory of the Lord make him supremely adorable and worthy of a life's deepest love.